U.S. Denies Any Part In Raid on Cuban Port

Post 5/15/64

By Murrey Marder
Staff Reporter

A sweeping denial of "any United States involvement" in Wednesday's anti-Castro raid on a Cuban port was issued yesterday by the State Department.

At the same time, the Commerce Department announced new controls on shipments of food and medicine from the United States to Cuba. Previously, they were the two categories of trade exempted from the U.S. embargo on sales to Cuba. Some food and drug trade still will be permitted but new Federal licenses will be required.

The two actions were unconnected. But together they underscored the distinction that United States policy makes between economic harrassment of the Castro regime and physical hit-and-run attacks upon it.

The Soviet Union yesterday repeated a generalized warning that an attack on Cuba would bring immediate retaliation with "serious consequences for the aggressors." But there was no indication that the warning was connected with the new raid. It was a statement in the Communist Party newspaper, Pravda, for the ninth anniversary of the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet bloc's military alliance.

Regarded as Minor

American officials did not indicate any special concern yesterday that the new raid on Cuba would produce any explosive international consequences, despite Cuban Premier Castro's charge that the United States was "responsible" for it.

Officials here regarded the raid itself, which destroyed a sugar mill, as minor, in a military sense.

But a series of raids that several Cuban exile groups are pledged to carry out could have a cumulatively combustible effect.

State Department press spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said no agencies of the U.S. Government were involved in any way with the raid carried out in the name of the Revolutionary Recovery Movement (MRR).

When asked if "any CIA money was involved," he replied, "No, sir."

Statement Repeated

Castro charged that the attack was carried out by a raiding ship "belonging to the (U.S.) Central Intelligence Agency." Manuel Artime, head of MRR, worked closely with the CIA in the 1961 Bay of Pigs landing fiasco.

McCloskey reiterated U.S. statements of March 30, 1963, that "these attacks are neither supported nor condoned by this Government."

Because of the originally concealed American support for the 1961 landing on Cuba, the credibility of United States' statements about Cuba was damaged.

American officials are concerned that the kind of press conference held in Miami on Wednesday to announce the MRR raid could again undermine that credibility. They are seeking ways to prevent a repetition of the conferences. MRR and other exile groups say they are operating from bases in the Central American and Caribbean areas.

In Miami yesterday, U.S. Customs officials announced that two days ago they seized a radio-controlled torpedo from two Cubans who were testing it on a lake near Miami International Airport.

U.S. Denies Any Part In Raid on Cuban Port

By Murrey Marder
Staff Reporter

5/15/64

A sweeping denial of "any United States involvement" in Wednesday's anti-Castro raid on a Cuban port was issued yesterday by the State Department.

At the same time, the Commerce Department announced new controls on shipments of food and medicine from the United States to Cuba. Previously, they were the two categories of trade exempted from the U.S. embargo on sales to Cuba. Some food and drug trade still will be permitted but new Federal licenses will be required.

The two actions were unconnected. But together they underscored the distinction that United States policy makes between economic harrassment of the Castro regime and physical hit-and-run attacks upon it.

The Soviet Union yesterday repeated a generalized warning that an attack on Cuba would bring immediate retaliation with "serious consequences for the aggressors." But there was no indication that the warning was connected with the new raid. It was a statement in the Communist Party newspaper, Pravda, for the ninth anniversary of the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet bloc's military alliance.

Regarded as Minor

American officials did not indicate any special concern yesterday that the new raid on Cuba would produce any explosive international consequences, despite Cuban Premier Castro's charge that the United States was "responsible" for it.

Officials here regarded the raid itself, which destroyed a sugar mill, as minor, in a military sense.

But a series of raids that several Cuban exile groups are pledged to carry out could have a cumulatively combustible effect.

State Department press spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said no agencies of the U.S. Government were involved in any way with the raid carried out in the name of the Revolutionary Recovery Movement (MRR).

When asked if "any CIA money was involved," he replied, "No, sir."

Statement Repeated

Castro charged that the attack was carried out by a raiding ship "belonging to the (U.S.) Central Intelligence Agency." Manuel Artime, head of MRR, worked closely with the CIA in the 1961 Bay of Pigs landing fiasco.

McCloskey reiterated U.S. statements of March 30, 1963, that "these attacks are neither supported nor condoned by this Government."

Because of the originally concealed American support for the 1961 landing on Cuba, the credibility of United States' statements about Cuba was damaged.

American officials are concerned that the kind of press conference held in Miami on Wednesday to announce the MRR raid could again undermine that credibility. They are seeking ways to prevent a repetition of the conferences. MRR and other exile groups say they are operating from bases in the Central American and Caribbean areas.

In Miami yesterday, U.S. Customs officials announced that two days ago they seized a radio-controlled torpedo from two Cubans who were testing it on a lake near Miami International Airport.